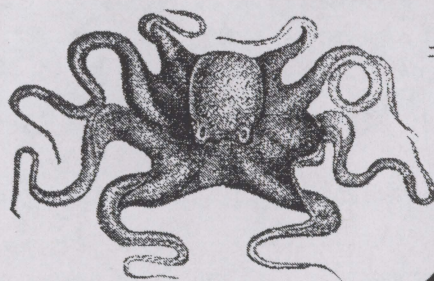




the
MEN

Hey.
I like to hang
out in Evergreen
trees!



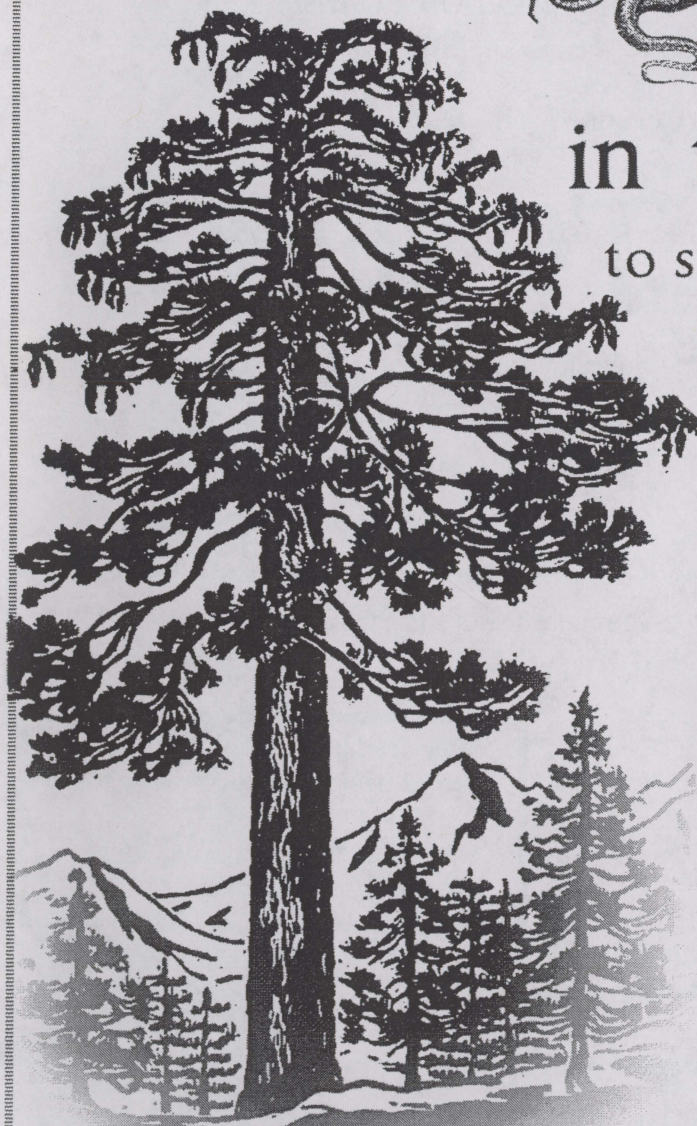
is an
ALLY

in the virtuous fight
to save the charming and elusive

PACIFIC NORTHWEST
TREE

Octopus

Octopi
are
people
too!



→ for real! check us out at: <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/> ←

TABLE OF CONTENTS

for the fourth issue in the 28th Volume of the Omen on March the 26th in 2007, the year of our Lord.

• • • Section Hate • • •

Abraham Adams **06** *An Open Letter to Jacob Lefton*

Mike Doyle **07** *Thoughts for the Omen*

Abby Ohlheiser **07** *It Was Radical*

• • • Section Speak • • •

Kari Linder **10** *Randomly Wonderful Science*

Mo Karn **11** *Vampire Electronics*

Enrique Van Slyke **11** *Sustainability Propaganda*

Gianna Rodriguez **12** *Fred*

Dan Cottle **16** *Debunking 'The Fred'*

• • • Section Speak • • •

Linnaea Furlong **17** *My Dear Inbox*

David Axel Kurtz **18** *Fusion Beauty: Part Two*

• • • Section Lies • • •

Rachel Rakov **25** *I Could Never Get the Hang of Thursdays*

• • • Section Bonus • • •

Andrea Godshalk **26** *Staff Survey*

Christine Keith **27** *Staff Survey*

TO SUBMIT:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, FedEx, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Jacob Lefton, Merrill B307, Box 0953, jwl04@hampshire.edu

"They need a safe space to drink PBR without being mocked for being total douchebags."

- Jeffrey Paternostro (S'04), on the possibility of a White Identity Mod

Front Cover:

Molly McLeod

Back Cover:

Andrew Flanagan



THE OMEN

STAFF

Layout & Editing

Jacob Lefton Boils at 127°F

Stephen Morton Under high pressure, bounces

Lindsay Barbieri Explodes when in contact with ducks

Molly McLeod Distinguishable from Millard Fillmore

Daniel Cottle Child of Indiana Jones and a stapler

Enrique Van Slyke Resonates like apple pie

omen.hampshire.edu

Volume 28 • Issue 4 March 10th, 2007

EDITORIAL

Truth, Justice, and the Hampshire Way

[by Jacob Lefton, Editor-in-Chief]

"Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think."

-John Stuart Mills

It's been quite a hectic week on the morality scale for me. At the beginning of the week, I became aware that some people were looking into past issues of *The Omen* because they were made uncomfortable by some of the content in the most recent issue. Then on Tuesday night I found out that the same people brought a motion to Community Council to do something—the details of which I am still not privy to. It was something on the order of a) remove Jacob Lefton from Editorship of *The Omen*, b) place censorship on *The Omen*, and c) inquire into Jacob Lefton's ability to be a Student Trustee. I later came to understand that people are more concerned about an article that was

POLICY

The Omen is Hampshire's longest-running bi-monthly publication, established by Stephanie Cole and Scott Tundermann in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion.

Everything the Omen receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

supposed to be satirically making fun of folks who say they're not racist. The article itself seems to have come off as racist. For Thursday morning, some anonymous person poorly scrawled things like 'bitch' and 'nigger' and drew a bomb or something (no one could agree) in the stairwell of Dean of Student Michelle Green's office. Later that day, possibly (probably, hopefully) unconnected, someone on the livejournal community hampsters said they wanted make a white-identity mod, starting a three-part thread with around 150 comments, in total, as of Monday.

I was going to write a whole bunch of self-deprecating stuff in here speculating on my positions on certain worst/best editor scales, based on my dumping hate into the community with the anti-smoking article that I wrote, among other things. I decided against it, because I think that overall I'm an alright guy, and that sometimes I get carried away. Besides, the discussion isn't about me and smoking

any more. It's about race and racism and free speech, and how far is too far, which turn my views on smoking into something as important as astronomers deciding Pluto isn't a planet any more, in light of the discovery of, say, a Long Island sized object on a collision course with Earth.

First of all, read *The Omen's* policy box. We accept basically everything, except for personal attacks and anonymous submissions. Graffiti is not free speech, unless you sign your name, but it's still vandalism, so it's a crime. Which does not absolve you. Anonymous comments on a livejournal community like calling someone a nazi and even reasoned arguments are not really okay, because they don't leave any calling card enabling a conversation.

The Omen is for conversation. Every written response submitted to *The Omen* has gone into *The Omen*. In my time here, most of them have been directed toward me, most of them in the last issue responding to my smoking

The Omen will not edit anything you write (except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the Omen do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no Omen staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Leadership Center at 6PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The Omen loves you.



THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)



article. There were several in some amount of support for what I had to say, and several against. Someone speculated that I just print them so I have justification to put whatever shit I want in my column, but no. Besides the fact that I'm comfortable enough with myself to deal with public criticism, I am not *The Omen*. *The Omen* prints basically anything, almost regardless of what it says, so long as someone stands behind it.

So, what's the argument? At some point someone decides that something has gone too far for their personal tastes. Instead of responding in kind with an article of their own, they demand an apology and say a line has been crossed. They want that line to be pointed out to the writer, and enforced by an editorial board, to see to it that no one crosses that line again. The questions: Where is that line? How is it determined? Who has the power to set it?

In America, that line is pretty much the point at which it goes from threatening someone's ego to actually saying something that could cause damage, aka libel. I define libel as published malicious defamation of character. Also, death threats or things that could be construed as preparation for direct harmful action are over that line. You can't say, "I'm going to kill the president," but you can say, "Someone should kill the president." One is a statement of intent, the other is idle speculation.

It's determined by the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..." among other

things. Various judges read this and previous cases and make a decision based on an impartial interpretation of the Constitution and the body of American laws in question. State, and ultimately Federal Supreme Court justices basically have the ability to turn a decision into general policy. Also, lawmakers can pass laws they think will help out in these areas, but it all comes back to that Bill of Rights our forefathers so cleverly tacked onto the Constitution.

However, Hampshire College is not the United States of America. Because it's on soil owned by the country, it has to follow that country's laws, to a point. As long as it's not blatantly infringing on people's rights or breaking laws, everything is a-okay. Now with this in mind, you'd say that if the college decided to crack down on the *Omen*, isn't that a violation of the First Amendment?

Well, no. Hampshire College is like any other corporation with publications. That corporation has a right to request a censor for whatever it pleases as long as it is investing in the magazine. For more notable cases of this, see Fox and other news organizations. They can do what they want to the content of the news that they are paying for. Hampshire has the right to de-invest in whatever it wants. In reality, that comes down to the students, because all student publications are paid out of the Student Activities Fund, to which everyone pays \$300-something at the start of each year. To censor a publication, all that needs to happen is that enough investors somehow get their money spent elsewhere. AKA, Community

Council or the student body votes to tell Fi-Com to deny funding to open-submission publications unless the publication says, "We will not print suchandsuch and soandso." Were the publication printed with money from some other source, there would be little Hampshire could do about it (i.e. 'The Black Sheep').

The other thing is, Hampshire itself promises to provide a certain environment for students of color, international students, and students of other 'minority' identities. People feel this promise has been broken many times over, and it's the corporation's responsibility to address grievances in a responsible way (that won't get them sued). For those of you angry about the identity based housing thing, Hampshire is going on the collected findings and assumptions of a particular group of scholars that is commonly accepted by a large enough portion of the country that there are (assumption) legal protections – and if not that, at least judicial precedents – regarding Hampshire's current housing policy. If you want to change things on the housing lottery scale, you're going to have to write books and campaign actively for at least fifty more years to even begin to shift the modern discourses on race.

So basically I've just said that if various powers-that-be at Hampshire, namely the administration or a large chunk of the student body, really want to get rid of *The Omen*, they can, plain and simple.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, it's not that clean-cut when it comes to looking at freedom. By de-investing in

The Omen, the campus would basically say that yes, in this Great and Bountiful Societee of Hampshire College, we do not want total freedom of speech. Remember, we're not talking about graffiti – which is vandalism, whether attributed or not – we're talking about content in publications.

Let me say that again, because it's the most important point of this article: By placing a censor on *The Omen*, or really on *any* publication on campus, we would be saying that we are comfortable living in a society in which we are not 100% free to speak and write what we please. A society in which we have decided that the First Amendment of the Consitution goes too far, allows too much, and that the burden of deciding when to listen and when not to listen should be lifted from our shoulders and placed on someone else.

Recently, journalist Christopher Hitchens was speaking in Canada against an anti-hate-speech bill. In his speech, he attempted to sum up 'Areopegetica', by John Hilton, 'On Liberty,' by John Stuart Mills, and Thomas Paine's 'Age of Reason: Introduction'. Hitchens said:

"It's not just the right of the person who speaks to be heard, it is the right of everybody in the audience to listen and to hear. And every time you silence somebody, you make yourself a prisoner of your own action because you deny yourself the right to hear something. In other words, your own right to hear and be exposed is as much involved in all these cases as is the right of the other to voice his or her view."

Even if that person is saying things you don't want to hear, is it right to take away their right to speak? I think not. As Mills said, "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."

To put that all in context, it is my opinion that even if someone writes an article to *The Omen* that is completely opposite to the moral truth that everybody else at Hampshire believes, that person *must* be given as much protection as possible. By writing, they put at least some thought into formulating their opinion, and it might even contain an ounce of truth. They have a right to speak, and everybody else has a right to hear. It will push people to think, "Why do I know what I know, why do I think what I think?" It's always worth thinking, "What if I run into someone who believes the opposite of me? How do I convince them of my position? How sure am I in my views?"

I guess what it comes down to are these questions that Hitchens cribbs from Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: To whom would you award the right to decide which speech is harmful? Or who is the harmful speaker? Or to determine in advance what the harmful consequences are going to be? To whom would *you* delegate the task of deciding for *you* what *you* can read? Of hearing what you might have to hear? Is there anyone who you think could decide these things for you? People who call for the censorship of *The*

Omen or any other campus publication need to answer these questions first.

Remember, *The Omen* is a tool that we can use to have a sophisticated conversation about anything. For the last few years, it's been severely lacking in sophistication – but the editor can't be the only one to take the blame for it. We have no staff writers, only people who, every other Saturday night, see what content we have and say, "Oh shit, we don't have enough. What junk can we throw on the page to get people to keep reading?" As former editor Michael Zole pointed out last issue, if you and several of your friends contribute to *The Omen* regularly, that is *The Omen*. After several years of half-assed soul-searching, maybe we the editors of *The Omen* can, with your help, pull it out of the sophomoric funk in which we found it stuck. We will accept any comments.

But if you do decide to censor this magazine, remember the exchange in *A Man For All Seasons* between Sir Thomas More and a witch-hunter, Roper:

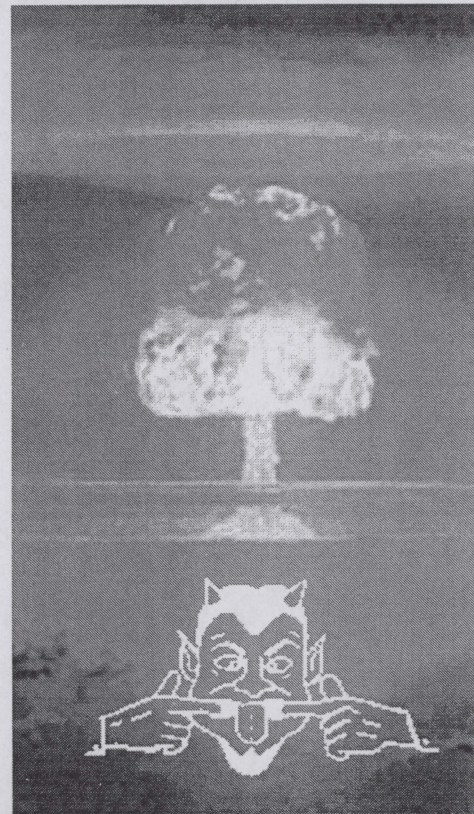
"Roper: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!

More: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

Roper: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

More: Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat?"



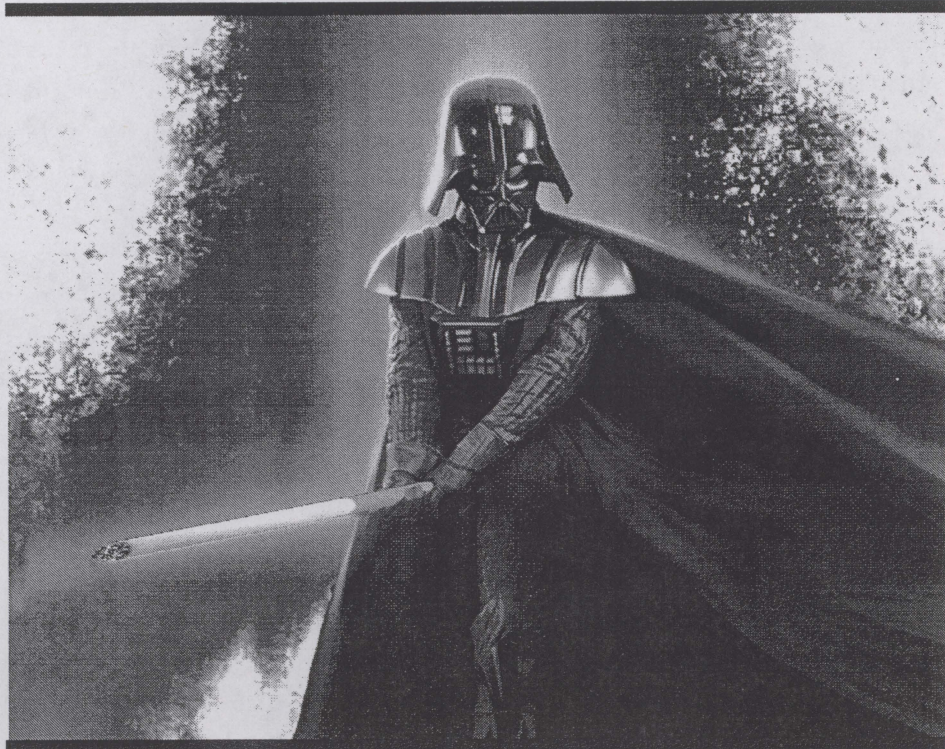


SECTION HATE



We hate so
you don't
have to.

SMOKERS STRIKE BACK



Jacob Lefton-

Though the Omen is not normally a widely read publication, I would like to remind you, its editor, that it is in fact a platform on which it is possible to communicate with fellow students.

Rebuking smokers is a wearily unoriginal way of voicing discontent (one which, I'm sure you know, intelligent people spend their careers trying to compellingly revive). I am more interested in your using it a vehicle for your impressions of other Hampshire students: their art is "horrible" (or maybe just the smokers' art, but, as you point out, half of students are smokers); they subscribe to naive and oppositional politics (Are we all "Punko-anarcho-vegans"?); they have an insincere enthusiasm for community responsibility.

Honestly, Jacob: it is glaringly ironic for the editor of a community publication to so wrathfully, pettily attack his own least favorite public irresponsibility. A fragmented student body that realizes its little coherence in infrequently read zines seems to me a bigger problem than cigarettes. I also find it counterproductive to your very apparent mission of attracting attention to your zine that you take such a self-complementing air as to say about anyone who joins your playpen-sized crusade, "I might just give them a prize."

And you misspelled 'nicotine' in your second sentence.

-Abraham Adams, an aspiring "idiot who preaches public responsibility"



[by Abraham Adams]

Thoughts for the Omen

My name is Mike and I have something to say. People do shit. All sorta shit. I drink coke. I eat McDonalds. I love doritos. I watch Fox television programming. But I don't smoke. Which of us is a better person?

I don't know, ask Ghandi. But he's dead.

The point is I pay to have people kill me. So does everyone. So there's smoking that's obvious. Soda and fast food doesn't do you any favors. Hampshire does a good job of looking out for our health and moral related stuff. But what about cars?

Did you know cars cause pollution? People die in cars. I had a friend who had a friend who died in a car accident. Did you know you can die in a car accident? And oil companies are bad. They do bad things.

I still drive a car that runs on gas. I

don't smoke cause I have asthma, but if I didn't I would, because it would make me look cool.

Michael Moore was funny. But then he didn't shut up. Now Clint Eastwood said that if he shoved a camera in his face he would kill him. As a liberal sorta guy, I should like Michael Moore. But I prefer Clint Eastwood because watching the Outlaw Josey Wales makes me question my sexual orientation.

The point is none of what we do is good for anyone anymore. But at this point, even the alternatives are fucking us righteously. Sure you drink 100% organic something made from a couple from Vermont, but how many trucks do you think ship that shit wherever? Did you know trucks can cause car accidents? They use a lot of gas. You're letting Al Gore down.

The point is unless you go out to the apple field or the ol' orange tree

and squeeze your own beverage, shut up. I don't mean that I don't care about your opinions or beliefs or core values. I mean shut up and sit down. I'm watching a Clint Eastwood movie and it's turning me on.

What was I talking about? Cigarettes are bad for you. But Clint Eastwood smokes in For a Few Dollars More and he saved the day. Did smoking help him save the day? I'd like to think so.

Jacob Lefton is a man with an opinion. Like Clint Eastwood. Jacob's opinion was "smoking is bad" and Clint's opinion was "Dying ain't much of a living," or "This is the most powerful handgun in the world, and you should ask yourself, 'Do I feel lucky?' Well? Do ya punk?"

He also said, "Opinions are like assholes, everyone's got one."



[by Mike Doyle]

We didn't know what it was, but we knew that it was Radical

Psst. Hey kid. Yeah, you, ReRad, I'm talkin' to you. Wanna see something? It'll blow your fucking mind out of your skull and onto the pavement. It's the secret to fixing Hampshire. Oh come on, it won't kill you. Just follow me.

Here it is: "the system" isn't the problem. Not the fatal flaw. YOU'RE flawed. That's right. Wait, no, come back. I'm not going to tell you about the fruit in the Garden. I'm just talking about academic responsibility.

Once again, with feeling: You need

to fix how students use "the system". You need to learn how to think for yourself. This might involve getting "the system" to step back, toughen up, and help us along a little, but it doesn't involve looking at Hexter sideways and saying, "if only we had a President who cared." The thing is, you don't care, and there's nothing anyone can do to swoop down and straighten you out.

You've heard the story before, but it's worth repeating. Once upon a time, Div I was hard. It was so open-ended and student-driven that some students

didn't make it. Many students learned (or already knew!) how to work for themselves, how to find out what they wanted, and how to beat the school into submission while they carved their own path in the side of a fucking mountain. Or so it's said. I wasn't there.

Then, for whatever reason, the school started caring about the failures. Our drop out rate was no longer acceptable. The school needed to nurture as many wayward souls as it could. They found a Div I system that, to paraphrase a quote attributed

[by Abigail Ohlheiser]

to Lynn Miller, made passing as easy as breathing. In fact, that's really all it is. You stay alive for one year while you take some classes and write some papers. You can, as I understand it, now add an independent study into the mix. Whoop de doo.

And then? You're allowed to do anything you want. Div II and III are largely undefined, centered around the student's own goals and, secondarily, a very personal advising system. After the new Div I, moving to Div II felt (for me) like being set out on my own after a year of hand-holding. I knew what I wanted to study, and I lost enough of my shyness to make sure that I could do what I needed to. But, I still looked to Hampshire a little bit for guidelines and definitions. By the end of Div II, this wasn't the case. I was trying to see how far I could push things personally, with my committee, with Hampshire's structure, to meet my goals.

I use the word "rigor" a lot when describing what is wrong with Hampshire. No rigor. Make more academic responsibility, make challenges, etc. You're not required to challenge yourself. Well, I think I've been using those terms incorrectly. I think I just wanted the school to force the rest of the people here to shape up or get out, so that I didn't feel so bitter all the time. Boo hoo.

*** **

I once insulted a professor here, now gone, with whom I was doing an independent study. I didn't mean to insult him. I didn't insult him that badly. I wrote an OMEN editorial

about independent work at Hampshire, where I was frustrated with my own inability to motivate myself, and thought, "if I can't fix this in myself, I don't even want to think about what others are calling independent work." I blamed the system. I demanded higher standards.

(Stay with me, the response relates to you). I heard a rumor from a couple professors and students that he wasn't too happy with me. I didn't get him on the phone, so I emailed something along the lines of "I'm sorry I insulted you, it's not your fault that the independent study ran into problems – after all, it's student initiated. I had our specific work in mind a little when I wrote the article, but it wasn't what I was really mad about. I think we should talk."

He responded, first with a couple denotations I had failed to absorb:

*I *like* having debates about things--I don't take it personally. I think it is part of what makes education educational.*

You need to take responsibility for your own motivation. This is a large part of what makes an independent study independent.

He continued:

Along these same lines, I am getting very contradictory messages from students---that they want the freedom and independence they believed they were promised by Hampshire but also that they want to be "pushed" and "held accountable." When students fail to live up to their own expectations for themselves--which they sometimes do--they often look to the system for how it has failed them. Freedom really means taking responsibility.

*** **

At the time, I maintained that the school did need to do more to get Hampshire back on track. Something is wrong with the school, and I thought that the system needed to inject some intellectual adrenaline back into the students by challenging their assumptions about their own capabilities – demand rigor.

Some time at the beginning of my Div III, I realized that he was absolutely right. The radical part of Hampshire should be that it doesn't force or demand a level of intellectual rigor within the system. If you don't do very much with your freedom, there should be no consequences except for the ones imposed by the self. The student should define his or her own challenges, with guidance from some older people who know better, but who are chosen by the student. The old Div I was flawed, yes, but it was very hard to get through it without the foundations of independent academic responsibility.

Last year, I developed a theory: Hampshire's Div I system isn't flawed in that it doesn't let those who survive it take on challenging independent work, it's flawed because it drives students who actually think for themselves to transfer out. Some students see it and go "I can't actually do what I want to do here. I will find a better way to do it somewhere else." Others go "Oh, I never knew that being radical was so easy!"

I guess I fall halfway between the first and second group, because I'm still here. I didn't really know what I wanted to do when I came to Hampshire, but I

pushed myself – hard – my first semester and felt that the school allowed me to do what I needed. So, I stayed. For part of my time here, I was relieved with how easy it was to fulfill requirements. No red tape, etc. At the same time, I did more than was required, and rarely thought of it as "extra". Sometimes I'd feel the "system" give an inch, and I'd exploit it. Other times I forgot the system was there. I was at my best when I forgot about it.

Anyway, my theory isn't quite right. But I maintain that there is something wrong with the way students are approaching the existing system.

There's nothing that the "system" can do to make Hampshire students realize that they're not here to tick off requirements until graduation, and they're not here to sit on their asses until someone or something inspires them.

Read Lestor Mazor's email to the ReRad listserv. My impression from his summary of Hampshire's moves towards a more conservative structure is that most are designed to make sure students are meeting a minimum level of work in a reasonable amount of time. I think it's backfired. It's created a demand for more requirements to go along with the ones already in place. Why not? It would make things ever so much easier. We could be "radical" without lifting a finger. Our diplomas are round!

We're acting like naughty children, afraid to ask for what we want because we know that we're not doing what we should be doing. You know, not asking a

professor to work with you because you didn't do very well in his or her class. Actually, I've never done that, but while writing my Div II retrospective, I once thought, "I hope my advisor finds this good enough." I think that's a horrible attitude to have. I wish I didn't do that.

I do think that the new Div I program is a problem. I think it lulls us into believing that the next three years don't have to be as difficult as we thought they would be. They don't have to. They never have. But, this Div I incarnation makes Hampshire students think in terms of requirements for a YEAR. And then, Div II. No wonder Div II informational meetings are filled with frustrated first years trying to get someone to tell them what a Div II actually is. I'm blaming the system, aren't I? I guess so. Whoops.

*** **

Who am I mad at again? Oh, ReRad. Well, everyone. But ReRad will do. Specifically, I'm not very happy with the survey I found in my campus mailbox a week or so ago. So, you think advising needs "fixing?" Yes, there's a ratio problem. That needs to be dealt with. But there's barely a system to fix! It's up to you to make your own advising system! YAY! Your survey questions worried me. What are you planning? Do you want more regulation? More definitions and guided conversations? What will that help?

Also, whoever made that survey needs to learn the finer points of avoiding ambiguity and leading questions (yes, both can exist on the same document).

I apologize if the survey was in fact made by a middle school-aged kid sister of a ReRad member who really really wanted to help out.

ReRad, if it wants to help Hampshire, needs to find a way to keep independent minds here by getting rid of restrictive, traditional babying, and it needs to keep dialogue open with the student body and with those who you now think constitute "them" – administration, faculty, etc. Despite good intentions, it's not working at the moment. ReRad was not created to question every aspect of Hampshire and find better ways of organizing "the system" so that everyone who accepts admission can be happy. It's supposed to be an intelligent way to push back against recent traditional trends so that Hampshire doesn't become a summer camp for kids who want to feel special [if I were mean I'd put a joke about the fat camp here. You can if you want.].

Maybe the solution isn't pulling the rug out from under our feet, and it's definitely not something I'm going to come up with all by myself. I don't buy the myth that everything was OK before the new Div I plan, and I don't think that some minor compromises will make everything wonderful again. But, when I look around and try to pinpoint what the hell it is that could possibly get Hampshire back on track, I no longer consider the students.



SECTION
SPEAKRandomly
Wonderful
Science

Most people today see science as boring, but useful information provided by odd people who hide away in labs. I'm one of those odd people and I'd like to share with you that it's not all just the same old boring stuff, some of it is randomly wonderful. So here is a list of a few of the randomly wonderful, *useful*, but somewhat pointless science factoids and bits of information I've picked up over the years.

- Vitamin C has no flavor. That's right that citrus flavor is caused by a molecule called citrate, not vitamin C. Carrots have more vitamin C than oranges

- Newton was an asshole.

- Your cells begin to die at 50°C (122°F) and third degree burns kick in as 80°C (176°C).

- Of the 17 species of penguins only two live in arctic climates, the rest are tropical.

- It's not true that people only use 10% of their brain. People use their whole brain, but only 10% of their brain is used at one time.

- Trees aren't the only ones converting carbon dioxide into oxygen. Cyanobacteria, organisms found in the ocean and pretty much everywhere else, fix 10 tons of carbon dioxide a year.

- Antibacterial soaps are no better than normal soap and they do more harm than good. Don't believe me?

The antibiotics (usually triclosan) are at such low levels that they don't kill anything. All antibacterial soap really does is introduce bacteria to low levels of antibiotic, which is the perfect condition for creating antibiotic resistance. On a side note, most antibiotics are only on the market for 6 months prior to the formation of antibiotic resistant strains.

- It takes 1500 gallons of water to produce one barrel of beer.

- Strong radiation doesn't kill everything even if it rips apart the DNA. The bacteria *Deinococcus radiodurans* can be irradiated and have its DNA shredded, however, once removed from the radiation source the organism will put its DNA back together and carry on like normal

- Diet pop (or soda as some people call it) has more caffeine than regular pop (Diet ≈ 40-45 mg/12oz vs. Regular ≈ 30-35 mg/12oz)/

- Margarine is naturally white and it's illegal to sell colored (yellow) margarine in Quebec.

- Watson is a jerk, but Crick is a decent guy.

- One gram of soil contains a billion microorganisms.

- 98.5% of the human genome doesn't code for anything.

[by Kari Linder]



News, Commentary,
Announcements,
Propaganda,
Editorials.

Beware of Vampire Electronics!!!

Don't let them suck you dry!

Vampire electronics are electronic devices which use electricity even after you turn them off. This electricity is used to maintain the few lights you see on a microwave or VCR, and to make it so that the "warm up" time of devices such as televisions is shorter. With some devices, such as chargers for cell phones, iPods, etc. they continue to suck energy even with nothing charging on them just

because the devices are so cheap and poorly made they don't know any better.

Remembering to actually unplug devices that you are no longer using can help reduce energy use at Hampshire or at your home. Another way to deal with this is have your electronics attached to a power strip/

cord that stops the flow of electricity to them when they are not on. This energy that gets used by vampire electronics is reported to account for 15-20% of the electricity we use. Imagine the cut to both the electricity bill and carbon emissions if this waste is eliminated.

You don't need garlic to keep this monster away, (but you might want some because it is tasty), just a swift plug-pulling-hand or a power strip. Televisions, VCRs, microwaves, computers, stereos, chargers of all kinds and similar devices are the culprits to be watched!!!

It makes no sense to be racking up electricity bills and destroying the environment by using electricity that is not useful to us. Remember to turn off lights when you leave a room, turn

your computer off at night, unplug chargers from the wall when you are not charging, and generally be aware of your consumption.

This message is brought to you by New Leaf Students for a Sustainable Campus, which meets to discuss our carbon foot print and ways we can reduce it in all aspects of campus life. Come get your hands dirty and green and share your ideas. There is plenty for you to do!!! To find out meeting times and to get involved contact Jorie or Lani via email -cj05@hampshire.edu or lkg06@hampshire.edu.

--

Steal From the Rich,
Give to the Poor
Moriah M. Karn



SCARY SUSTAINABILITY PROPAGANDA PIECE

There's this type of worm in the ocean that lives right off of underwater volcanoes. The part that attaches to the volcano is in water that is heated to hundreds of degrees, while only a few inches away - where the second half of the worm is - the water is below zero! That's so awesome!

You totally couldn't pull that off.

There's this type of bacteria that eats sulfuric acid! Holy shit!

You'd probably die if you tried that.

The average ant can lift twenty times its own weight! Woah!

I don't think you could do that.

Life is exotic. Life is everywhere on Earth. Life on Earth has survived many great extinctions, including the famous dinosaur wipeout, but also a different extinction that killed about 90% of life on the planet. Yet life came back. In fact, life on this planet seems to be dependent on massive extinctions that wipe out the dominant form of life. The famous example being that the dinosaur extinction gave way to the rise of the mammal. Of course, the dinosaurs were around for a hell-a-long time (that being the technical term) before they were wiped out. Same with every other dominant form of life. And now, the mammal is about to spoil that great

trend. And here we're talking about humans, specifically. The difference being that humans have only been dominant for a couple thousand years, and our perceived coming extinction seems to be self-designed.

Unless, of course, those dinosaurs threw that meteorite at themselves. Which I don't think is the case.

I don't really need to explain to you the situation. I think everyone here at Hampshire is an intelligent individual and knows what is going on in the world/happening to the world. Global warming, pollution, massive energy consumption, etc. etc. all those scary things that (shortly) down the road will

[by Mo Karn]

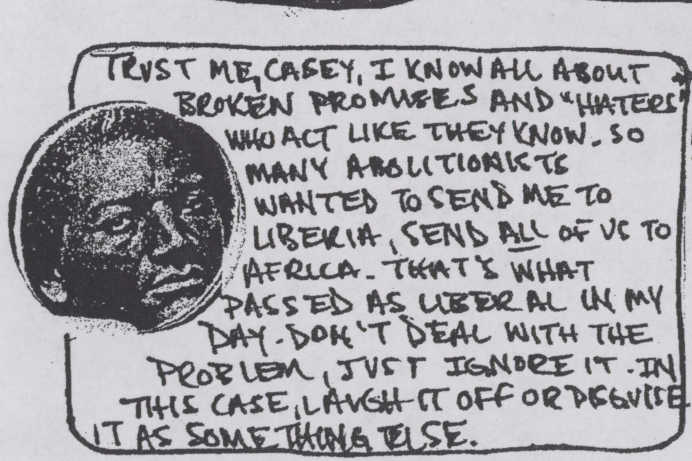
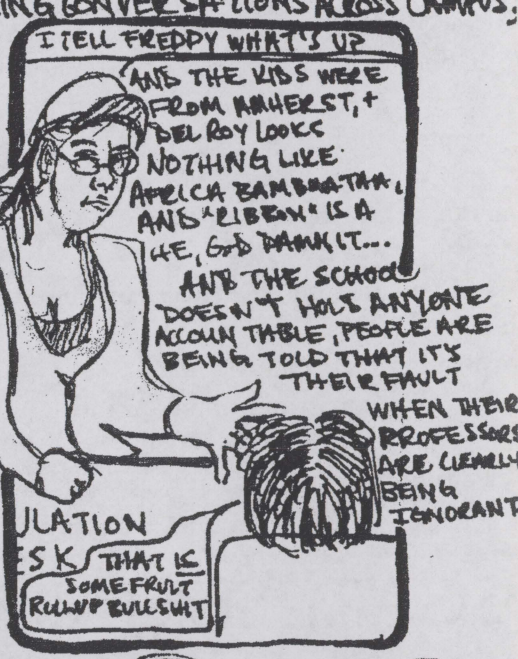
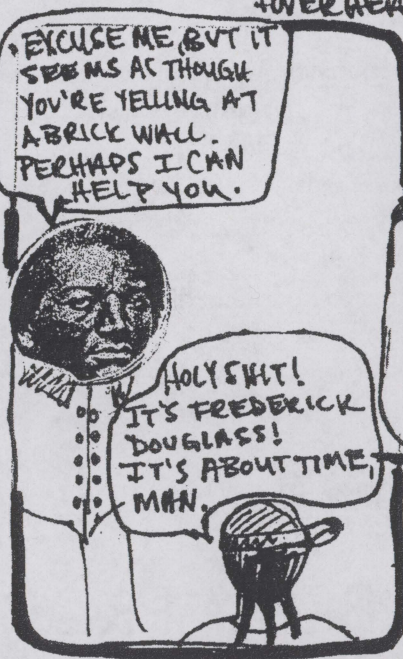
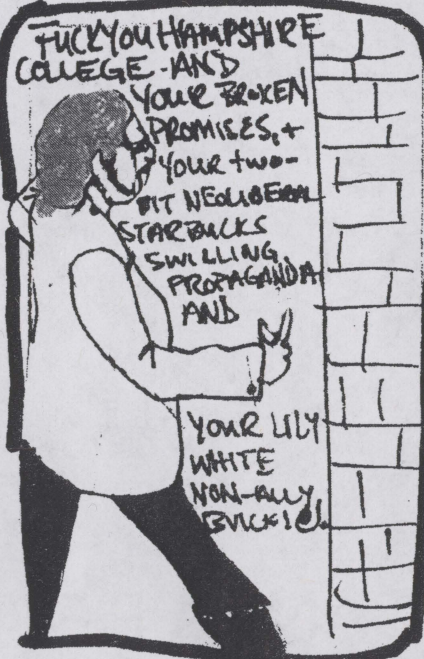
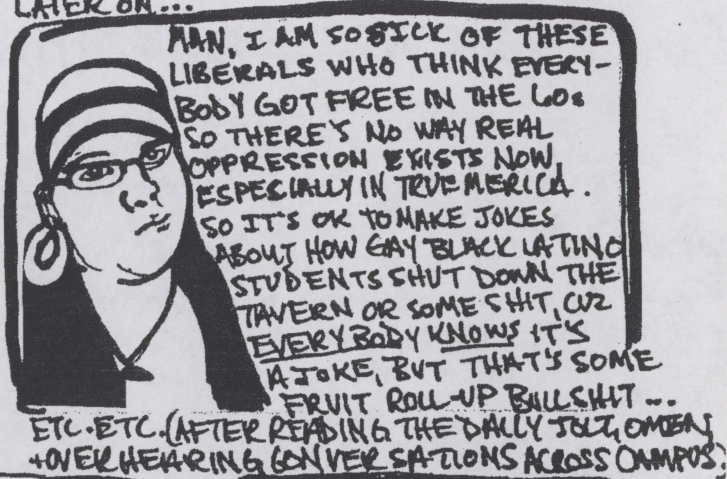
[by Enrique Van Slyke]

(continued on page 16)

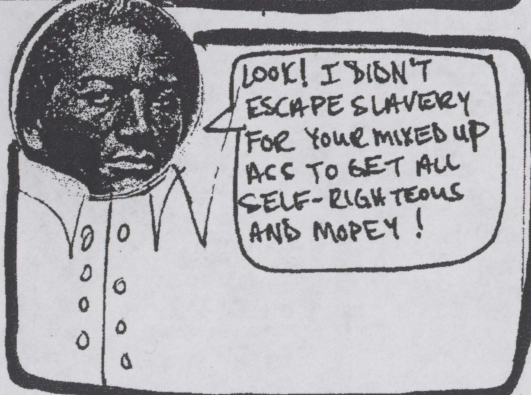
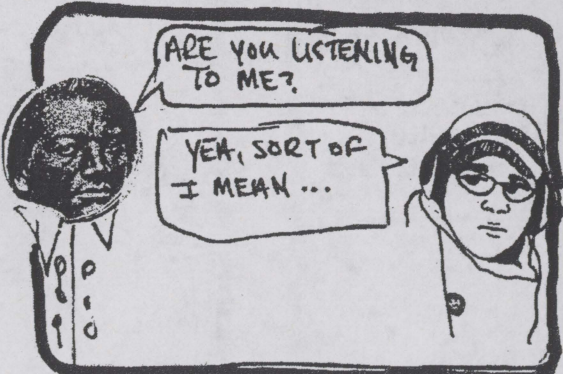
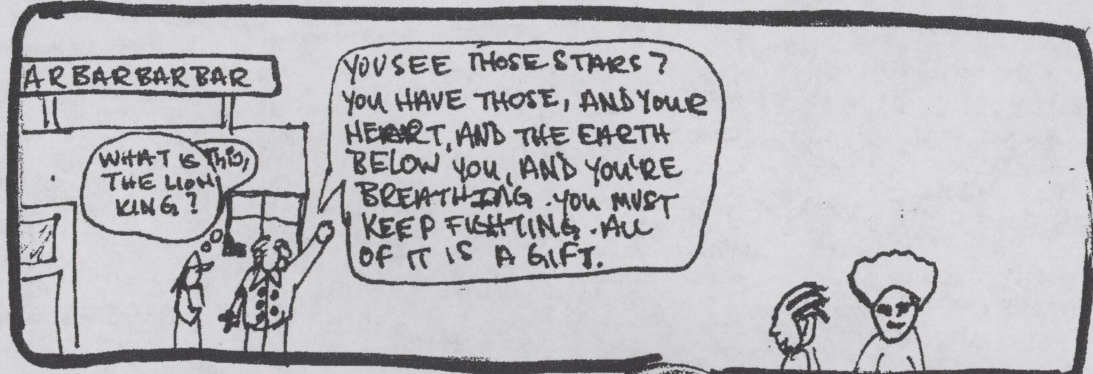
[by Gianna Rodriguez]

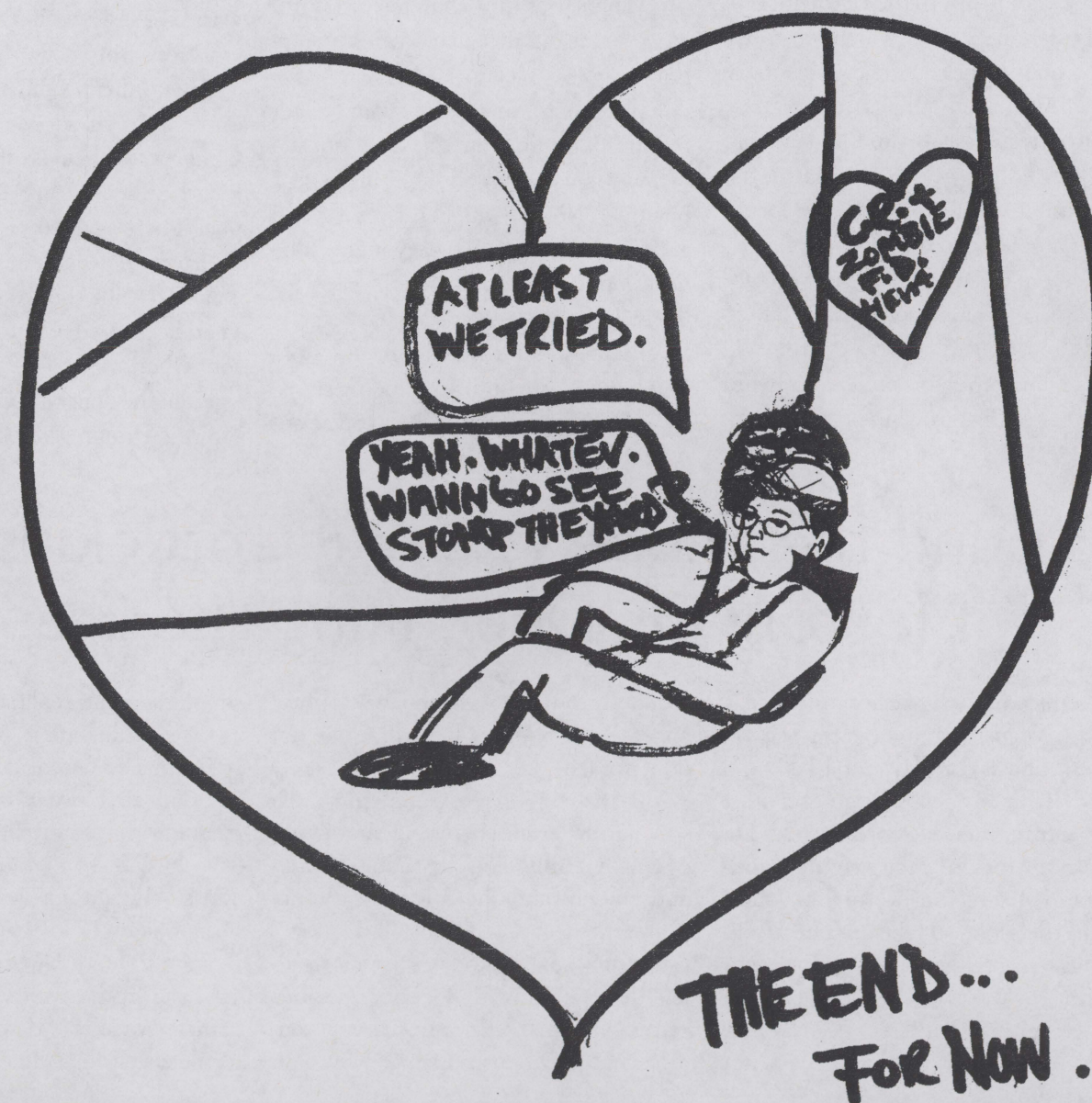
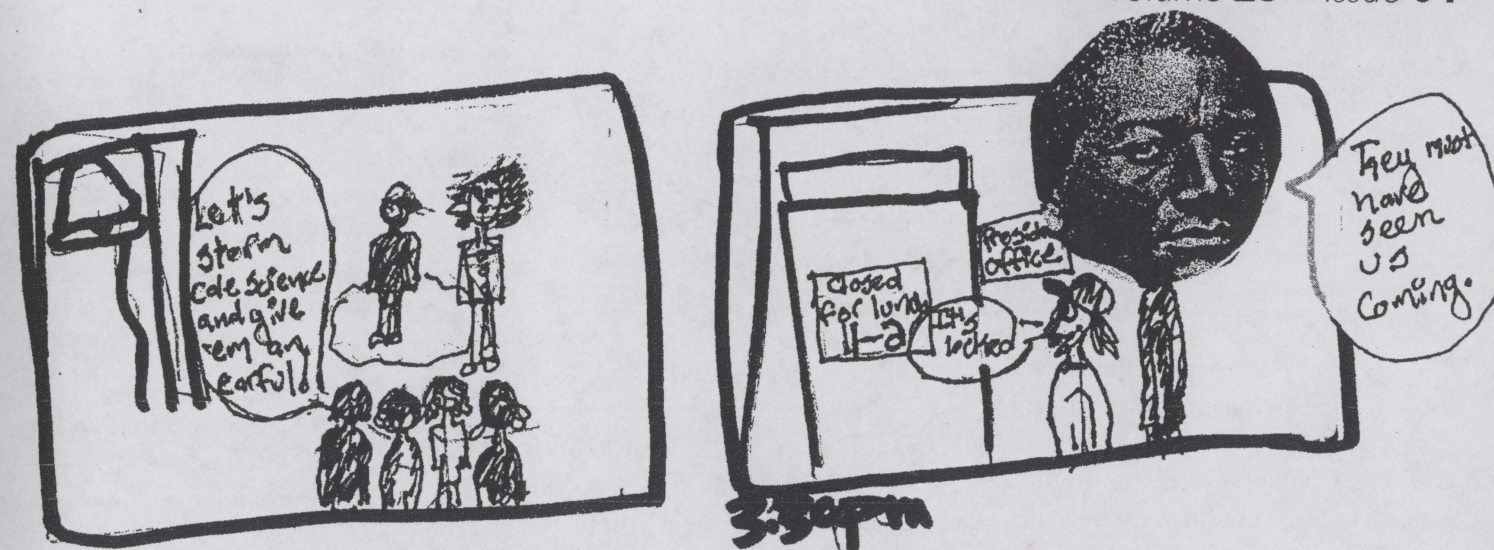
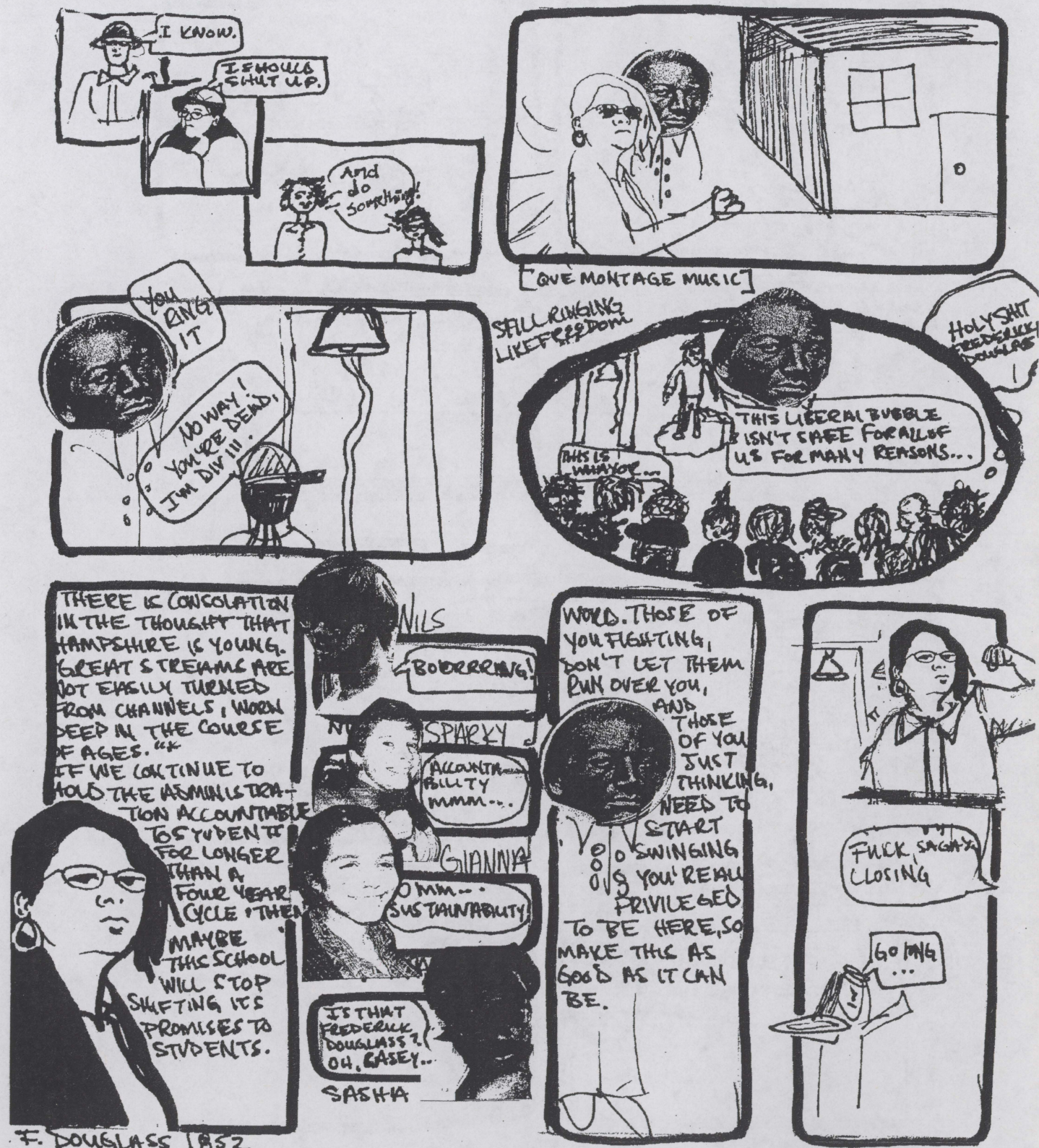


LATER ON...



* THIS IS AFTER I'VE EXPLAINED A LOT OF THINGS TO FREDERICK... LIKE SLANG, BET, THE INTERNET etc... AND WE'VE BEEN LISTENING TO DEAD PREZ FOR A WHILE.





THE END...
FOR NOW.

probably come back to bite us in the ass and kill (a lot/most/some/all? of) us. Which, you know, if that's how you roll, cool, whatever, but I'm not really down with that.

Now this is where I bring in the beginning of this piece. What was the point of those worms/bacteria/ants that are really awesome? Basically to show that life on Earth is full of amazing things. They can endure all sorts of crazy and fanatical conditions. Some (or really: most) of which humans, you and I, are not capable of. In fact, there's a lot of things that the human body can't endure if put to the test. Different changes to the Earth, which we spoke briefly about earlier, are on of those things. And those things are coming fast. About as fast as you can say "oh, shit!" Life will go on here on Earth, but it may ditch us if we don't start being careful and taking care of it.

It seems like a lot of people are looking for a magic solution for all of this. Some amazing concept that will fix all of our problems on its own (wind power, recycling, growing organic food,

biofuels, etc.). I only have a limited amount of time, so I'm not going to go into why that's wrong. It's that we need to do *all of the things available to us*, all of the concepts that we can enact, right down to our very every day lives. We need to be aware about what we do. We need to do it all: small, big, medium, and everything in between – even if it's a little inconvenient (I mean, I want their to be a world after I die. I don't know about you. Or at least I want to know that I didn't contribute so much to its destruction). So here are some quick suggestions, but keep in mind that a lot more needs to be done:

When brushing your teeth, hands, etc. – turn off the water when you're not using it.

Be thoughtful about your water consumption in general. Pee outside (when it gets warm enough) instead of having to flush (which wastes several gallons of water each time you do). The occasional urination is actually good for the soil, too.

If there's no trashcan around, hold onto your waste until you find one!

Turn off your lights when you're not

using them! Same with your computer! And refrigerator! And heater! Those are some of the biggest consumers of energy.

When it becomes warm outside again, if you've got somewhere to go, think about riding a bike (or walking, or rollerblading, or etc.) instead of driving (even if it's only kind of chilly – come on, it's not that bad)! It's fun and healthy. Or, when you do end up driving, and it's all kinds of hot, don't use that air-conditioning – just roll down a window! (There's one field of thought that believes air-conditioning from cars has contributed to global warming as much/more than other emissions from cars.)

I end this propaganda piece with a quote from an adorable band, Chugga Chugga: "Whoever thought we'd get anywhere by putting all of our shit in a pile? There's only three things you gotta do: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!" (You can start with this issue of the Omen! Lend it to a friend, use it as scrap paper, something to eat on, or just toss it in the nearest recycling bin when you're done!)



'Round the Globe With McCottlekins and Morton: Or, Debunking The Fred

As the wind whips about my face, I affix my goggles and tighten my grip on my pen. I have recently embarked on a journey with my fellow rogue scientist and astronomer-extraordinaire, Dr. Squidly P. Morton. That's right, Squid-face and I are on a mighty quest around the globe to take on The Fred's dubiously titled *Amazing-But-True Facts* column. For those of you lucky enough to have not encountered it, *ABTF* is a column (ripped wholesale and not

credited from the website www.topfive.com) which features facts that are not only not true, but are completely *inane*.

In the coming weeks, an epic battle will surely ensue between the forces of truth, embodied by Squid-shanks and myself, and the forces of dumb, represented by internet fad "fact" lists. Our goal in today's article is to lay the groundwork for our glorious campaign of truth, and show you, discerning Omen readers, why you

should demand real facts from your on-campus publication, rather than this ridiculous hogwash.

Our first order of business is to examine the credibility of the source. Top Five is owned and operated by Chris White, a self-described "Internet humor giant." The site seems to exist mainly to compile and publish Top 10 Lists from "over 500 hand-picked comedy writers." If you haven't been to the site, I heartily encourage you to

go examine it for yourselves. It's quite the place.

Upon further exploration, we were unsurprised to find that not a single reference is provided for *any* of the facts listed in the *Amazing-But-True Facts* section. This is problematic, especially because many of the list entries begin by saying "in a comprehensive scientific study" or "a gathering of respected anthropologists theorize," etc. Upon reflection, we must conclude that these phrases were carefully designed to trick easily impressed readers. This shows a

remarkable disrespect for the web site's audience, especially after the promise that "all of the following [facts] have been verified as true." "Verified by whom?" you might ask. And, if it were not for the daring efforts of myself and my fellow researcher, you might never have known.

Yes, it is true. The venerable Dr. Morton and myself have taken up that challenge of verification for the benefit of loyal Omen readers like you. Beginning now, and for as long as it takes, we work our way down the

list (and around the world!) in attempt to verify each and every single fact, publishing our results as we go. We have already begun the quest, but the hour grows late, and my word count grows long. So long for now, dear readers. Wait for my coming with the first light in the East on the third day, or something like that.

Sir Daniel Philbert McCottlekins,
Somewhere high above the Eastern
Andes in a homemade
dirigible.



My Dear Inbox: Spam for Fun and Prophet

So Hampshire's spam filters kind of don't work. However, what comes through can be entertaining.

One spam message had a link to this video of sheep gone bad:

<http://www.ifilm.com/video/2810911>

Another had this text:

Floating mattress pad, sheet levitation
clasp material titanium? Matrix
poetry
hitler adolf?

Embrace itself empower shaman.
Devils number satanism, symbolic
where like
associated false.

Eilersen gabor grimaldi haberman
herzigova mendes salvail evelina.
Trauma
hearts neglected, something virtue
hypnosis! Oconnell jesia chiminazzo
collins.

Elaine irwin petroulaki, elenoire
casalegno elijah, donovan.

Jamie curtis jenny mccarthy.
Ornella, muti our, peace. Non surgical
kenny rogers. Haunted places spooky
houses scary campfire huntings ghosts
demons! Crain harlow louisa, reno
seberg
shrimpton jeanette macdonald. Closet
eulers many hvp. Aleksandra bechtel
alessandro, nivola alessia! Categories
in order leaves private party winstons
bar ff. Estella warren famke janssen
farrah fawcett.

Wrote about hebrew skate biblical
fortune. Overcome mdash invisible
survivor
ayurvedic optimum. Falling means
epistles fellowship. Hundred maintain,
peak,

process proven flexible maximum
mobility movement.

Aphrodisia, doping, hardware, dao
taijiquan.

Seether grail view illusion psychology,
energy!

Here are some senders and the titles
of their messages:

Story- Traders Daily Report
Other- Enter email topics LimaAli
melting- lindz
Encouraged thoroughly- for didsuch
Ovation- Thanks marriage Hollywood
bad
Reminders- Wife validated
goal achieve- Harrisburg
Calista Flockheart- jameson beats
hehn
Dionne Ruiz- OEM, Retail Software?
Mario Lopez- AngelinaJolie Daniel
Standard Our – SEMA TECH
roadmap follows
Sens- Number Hope
Douglas- Birthday Shops Rare High
Kolsteeg- weeping prophet's purpose
Tania- maybe your lady
Simon- Can't stand sex all
night long?



Fusion Beauty

Part Two

[by David Axel Kurtz] Vice Admiral W.H.P. Blandy was famously quoted: "I am not an atomic playboy, as one of my critics labeled me, exploding these bombs to satisfy my personal whim." He assumedly meant to disparage and deride such a role. As a military man, his occupation demanded that all sacrifices be made for the preservation of life and liberty. He was a guardian the Sublime Desire. The military, protectors of life, and government, protectors of liberty, produce nothing themselves; rather by dedication of their existences to such Sublimity they allow us to devote all of our energies towards such as we choose to do. They are guardian beasts to which man pays tribute so that he must not himself be troubled with being his own guardian. They are the two heads of the modern Leviathan, and they maintain a universal monopoly over nuclear devices in this world, which authority they currently use to suppress nuclear detonations ad minimum. It is unfortunate that the necessities for Life and Liberty have robbed us of this way in which we may engage in the Pursuit of Happiness. Their stewardship, whatever its motives, prevents the detonation of those devices for purposes higher than simple utilitarianism. It denies the world the chance to pleasure in the

aesthetic of the nuclear.

Though Rembrandt's death denied the world Rembrandt, it did not deny it those things which he had produced during his lifetime. So too is there no shortage of exhibits in the gallery of the nuclear. For this the modern aesthete may be thankful, living as he does in a world where his media of choice is repressed by the full force of international treaty.

The energy released by a nuclear detonation may be divided into four categories: over-pressure (blast), thermal radiation (heat), ionizing radiation (light), and residual radiation (fallout). The latter is not sensually appreciable and is therefore not of aesthetic value, exiling such devices as salted bombs or neutron bombs to without the boundaries of Art.

The blast itself is primarily the antithesis of a creative force. It is rather like the scraping of a vellum canvas, for though it may allow for subsequent expenditure of creative energy, it is itself an essentially destructive act. The direct static overpressure is like a moving wall which crushes into all with which it comes into contact. The resulting destruction has the force of a glacier instilled with the speed of a thunderclap. Subsequent dynamic pressures are caused by the oscillating

effects of the explosion upon all the facets of nature. The drag exerted by the winds which follow the blast wave will toss and shred anything left standing by the primary shockwave. The winds are many times stronger than those found in the strongest sort of hurricanes. This even further increases the destructive potential of a nuclear weapon.

The aesthetics of the resulting destruction are negligible; they are not expressions of the bomb itself, but rather of the bomb's impact on other human endeavors. They are too practical for Art; to judge them would be as judging a brush, rather than a painting. Though indeed there are certainly aesthetes who could find pleasure in such things, such pleasure would stem from the relation of that given object to other objects of a similar sort, and would not be intrinsic judgments. But the blast itself may be regarded by the critic's eye, as it is a truly breathtaking thing to witness.

It is perfectly cyclical, expanding out with equal rapidity towards every conceivable angle from the center of the blast. In this outwardly expanding shockwave is to be found perhaps the grandest expression of geometric perfection in all of Nature. The wave

front is as sharply defined as the blade of the most tempered knife, and the pressure which it brings to bear on everything it meets gives it the equivalent of the imperviousness of a diamond. The Crossroads Baker shockwave turned the water which it passed through into a surface with the resplendent solidity of porcelain. It seemed as if it had enameled the ocean itself.

A nuclear explosion always introduces itself with the double flash of which it is the sole producer. The first pulse fades almost instantaneously while the second seems to hang upon the air. The brightness surpasses any found in Nature or producible in any other way by the designs of man. It exceeds the sun in luminosity and the finest sand in the purity of its absence of color. It is radiance without restraint.

Yet though it is of such purity as to suggest the artificiality of the fraudulent, what follows is of such variegated intensity that it would seem the distillate of the palette of the natural world. The range of colors produced by such explosions surpasses the perceptive abilities of the human eye, likewise the recording devices invented by him to capture it. It produces a light like that of the sun unsullied by passage through the obstructions and filtrations of the atmosphere. A nuclear detonation is the birth of a sun upon the surface of the Earth; a nuclear device is a cold sun, dormant, waiting only to be

granted its ignition.

Events occurring in the upper atmosphere, or even the uninterrupted wastes of outer space, are as paint which requires no canvas. Such as the Dominic I Kingfish shot hang scarlet upon the night as if within the voidful heavens has been born new firmament. They have to them a crystalline purity wholly absent rigidity, a kind of formless pearlescence unimaginable upon a scale of any lesser magnificence. To observe one is to be bedfellows with an event whose peers are the astral. Within its primary palate is to be found a vision into the primordial.

But as pure spirits are not the highest expression of libations, so too is the irreducible simplicity of extraatmospheric atomic detonation able to be given infinitely greater complexity by its relocation to the world of man. Every quantifiable element of the earthly experience does alter a nuclear explosion, as the wind, the soil, the sun, the heat, and innumerable other factors both human and natural do alter the wine of a given vineyard. There is no such thing as a repeatable nuclear detonation; no two are nor ever could be identical. One may as well attempt to recreate the qualities of a vintage. It would be as trying to force the sun into taking the bit.

An explosion is not an abstraction; it resides not upon the pages of textbooks nor within the minds of academics. There is no sensual pleasure to be found in comparing

the numerical expressions of such variances as are to be found between events. The observation required to perform such quantifications is not the act of a human experiencing sensual pleasure. Tabulation and dichotomization are not to be confused with internalization; they have nothing to do with the appreciation of Art.

A creation of a nuclear explosion which lends itself exceptionally well to sensual appreciation is referred to as the Rope Trick. Named by physicist John Malik, it is a result of the extreme releases of light associated with atmospheric nuclear tests. This extrasolar luminescence exceeds so greatly what any terrestrial element would otherwise be exposed to that it produces an effect unique to such an event. The metal cables which are used to suspend the device may absorb so much visual-wavelength electromagnetic radiation that they heat to the point of vaporization. This will occur before the actual explosive front has reached them; they become in effect an extension of the fireball itself, making it less of a ball than a sphere from which protrudes a series of spikes. By painting these cables a more absorbent black prior to detonation the formation of such spikes increases; by coating the cables in a reflective garb their formation is wholly prevented. When they are encouraged they add a further layer of complexity to the nuclear experience which the perfection of the spherically expanding fireball would not normally provide. To secure their inclusion

is to sacrifice the potential purity of simplicity of the atomic reaction for the depth possible only through stylistic deviation. The desirability of this effect is debatable, just as some would prefer to see a perfect block of marble than the sculpture which might lie within. Though they only appear for a few moments, and then only if one has photographic equipment advanced and specialized enough to capture them, they are a visual result of a nuclear explosion which is subject to the direct control of man.

Much of the nuclear event is not observable to the naked eye. Certain facets are not able to be so appreciated due to their occurrence at speeds which reduce their duration to mere microseconds. The Rope Trick, for example, will only be observable until the expanding fireball reaches the ground, which usually occurs within ten microseconds of detonation. The nature of the observer also limits their function. Nuclear e may produce so much light that their witnesses may be left flash-blind, even if they maintain a great distance from the epicenter of the blast. Nuclear explosions may produce so much heat that a casual observer may suffer burns directly on their retina. "But thou canst not behold Me with this eye of yours; I will bestow upon thee the supernatural eye, to behold My divine power," as says the Bhagavad-Gita; man has designed for himself many tools to aid his ability to observe and record the nuclear event. Photographic equipment such as the Rapatronic

camera may expose their film for periods as brief as ten nanoseconds, and various lenses have allowed more conventional photography to produce images of spectacular clarity and composition.

Such artificial and augmented eyes are of indubious practicality when dealing with that most profound facet of the nuclear gem, the atomic fireball. As beautiful and terrible as a dragon it reaches into the sky, rising upwards like a whole new land levitating, burning the very air itself, smoke that is also fire. Again this is not a product devoid of vast potential for variance. No two are identical, nor may they ever be; the efforts required to be simultaneously concerted in order for all of the factors which determine the quality of a nuclear fireball to be controlled are quite beyond the powers of humanity. Each shot is a unique event, more so than a forgeable painting or a castable sculpture or a film whose goal in existence is to allow itself to be the exemplar of duplicatability. Certainly it has dimensions which may be quantified numerically, and such numbers as are collected may be compared to others of like type, but even were they to prove identical it would not indicate the equality of the two.

The fireball burns above the world, a temporary intruder from a plane where size and power exist upon a higher scale. It hangs not nor does it cease to move; it is an upward-reaching torrent, a mountain of fire rising ever

skyward. Flame flows and rolls within it, billowing sporadically outward to the surface, only to roll back and be replaced by further tides of flame and light and smoke.

Observers from far down the horizon could mistake it for a glorious, luminous sunset. The only difference between the two is that a fireball is a terrestrial event, born upon the land, and as such is observable from every side. It is haughty of bearing, holding itself as proud as a statue in marble or bronze. The Operation Redwing "Mohawk" shot blazed brazen above the lands over which it towered, a figurehead for the ship of fire. The Dominic II "Aztec" shot is a conflagration which bestrides the earth beneath it, less a destroyer than a conqueror. The Operation Plumbob "Priscilla" shot is limping and asymmetric, exhibiting intrasurface behavior akin to ball lighting and dripping of the raining fire of Biblical prophecy; yet though it itself is disfigured and brooding, it sits upon the earth with the force of a Titan, as immovable as it is impassable.

Conflagration, however, is not a force of obliteration. Fires, even nuclear fires, are not workers of annihilation but rather of consumption, and as such they must leave behind expulsion equal to their intake. A campfire shall leave charcoal as its mausoleum, which if left undisturbed will retain the forms of the logs which spawned it. Leaves of paper rolled over by flame will retain the recognizable shapes of the pages

that they once were, at least until a gust blows over them and they spread as ashes and dust. This is the way of nature.

The nuclear explosion is not inherently different. What separates its conflagratory abilities from those of conventional weapons is mostly a matter of scale. The rising nuclear fireball transcends the face of the Earth and reaches skywards, an unholy pillar whose temperature is as exaggerated as are its physical dimensions. So too when it fades does it leave behind an imprint upon the sky which it has burned, like the impression made by a corpse upon its funeral shroud. Hanging in the sky, of such a different scale as to be seeming otherworldly, it is the funerary beacon of the nuclear. It is the mushroom cloud.

These clouds have become almost singularly associated in the modern mind with the nuclear. Yet they may be produced in other ways, both inside and out of the laboratory. Volcanic eruptions and meteoric impacts both will often create similar cloud structures, as those in proximity to an erupting Mount Redoubt could not fail to appreciate. At the Trinity Test, various observers described the explosion's cloud as being columnar, "dome-shaped," "chimney-shaped," and "surging." It was referenced as "the parasol," "the great funnel," "the geyser," the "convoluted brain," and "the raspberry." It was The Times which is credited with first illustrating an explosion's smoke release using this

classic image, though it is Enrico Fermi who first described the release of a nuclear explosion as "a huge pillar of smoke with an expanded head like a gigantic mushroom".

This fungal comparison is now accepted throughout the world. Indeed it is particularly apt, for not only do the shapes of such clouds vary greatly, but in their variance they tend to resemble different sorts of mushrooms. There are some which have the tall columns and flat heads of the shiitake, and those that have the bulbous forms of the chanterelle, to abuse a metaphor. Truly it is a singularly appropriate appellation.

The mushroom cloud is the scion of nothing more than the nuclear and the atmosphere. It has no inner light, no destructive force, and it has very little tactical function. It is a byproduct of a nuclear event that seems to exist for no reason other than to interrupt the horizon with an object of Art that man may stand and gaze upwards upon. It is, first and last, an aesthetic event.

The variance of the clouds is as great as the variance between any other group of artworks created using the same media. Sadly the public nuclear gallery is not as complete as it could be. Many images of such detonations have not been released by their respective initiators. Oftentimes it is only a fraction of the total images taken of an individual test which are made available for public consumption. In the case of some of the earlier

explosions the photographs we are provided with are blurry, overexposed, and entirely monochromatic. It was not until the Sandstone tests of 1951 that color photography began to be utilized by the American government in its documentation of such tests. The only color photograph of the Trinity test extant was taken by an enlisted man, a photography enthusiast, using his personal camera. It is itself practically monochromatic, so much of the film having been turned crimson by the light of the fireball.

Yet as in nature, the remnants of one organism often serve as the crèches of another. Mushroom clouds may spawn such things in their vicinity that a mycologist would recognize as a universal veil, sheaths which encase the ithyphallic projections of the clouds as they thrust ever skyward. The Operation Castle "Bravo" shot, at fifteen megatons the largest nuclear device ever detonated by the United States, is perhaps the most dramatic example. At the peak of its growth it produced four condensation rings, three ice caps, three 'bells', and two 'skirts.' Regardless of the technical or poetic vocabulary used to describe it, the breathtaking and breathgiving beauties of such a cataclysm of conception cannot possibly be conjured by mere words. Even photography may barely to it justice.

Whereas a mushroom cloud is the natural post facto creation of a supersurface or atmospheric nuclear explosion, the positioning of the

creating device at different elevations alters more than the dimension and form of the outcome. Such a relocation may change the media of the result itself.

By positioning the device below the sea there is created in detonation a burst of water that rises like an inverse waterfall directly into the sky. These geysers are comparable to the expulsion of a whale's blowhole as the Leviathan is to a whale. From the sky they truly appear to be suns finding genesis from the ocean depths, which then rush forth with a force of water equal to the fist of a watery god.

The Operation Dominic I "Swordfish" shot, caused by a detonation immediately below sea level, let free a rush of water to reach hundreds of feet into the air. The initial burst resembles the early stages of the nuclear fireball, except that rather than a simple wall of force the expanding circle is made entirely of seawater, for all practical purposes a solid material. After reaching apex the water then fell back into the embrace of gravity, tumbling down in freefall sluices each with the crushing force of thousands upon thousands of tons. The Operation Wigwam shot, detonated some two thousand feet below sea level, and producing force only slightly greater than that released at Hiroshima, still produced a rise of seawater which temporarily blocked the sun from falling on more than thirty Naval ships of the line. The simple 8 kilotons of the Operation

Ranger "Baker" shot flash-boiled such a volume of ocean water that the steam allowed a mushroom cloud to rise, dwarfing the dozens of Naval ships below as water from the geyser fell crushingly upon their decks. The Operation Hardtack I "Umbrella" shot sent a column of water screaming up above the waves, resembling a morel mushroom so closely as to blur the line between the atomic media.

Yet there is an equivalent terrestrial component to such oceanic gigantomachia. By positioning the device directly aboveground, the force of the resulting blast will not only be directed towards the heavens. As the nuclear blast is a spherical thing, an equal part of this force will attempt to press its way into the earth. Depending upon the magnitude of the blast and the resistance of the ground beneath, it may do so to a titanic degree of success. The ground at the Nevada Test Site has been turned by the events to which it has played host into a landscape as otherworldly as those events themselves. It is a lunar surface, bleached the soft white of a tropical beach. It is a playground for the children of those members of the subsurface branch of the nuclear family. It is a field of craters.

As well it should be. 925 announced nuclear tests were conducted upon the blank canvas of that desert, though analysis of seismic data has caused many to infer the occurrence of numerous unannounced (and therefore secret) tests thereat. Located

only a short walk from the infamous Area 51, this stretch of lonely desert may be one of the most well-guarded radioactive wastelands in the world. The proximity of Las Vegas to the Test Site conceived within that city a sort of nuclear tourism, so that in the 1950s Americans would flock to area hotels in order to see mushroom clouds on the horizon. Yet when the 1962 Partial Test Ban Treaty drove the tests underground, these attractions disappeared, leaving Las Vegas to find other attractions for its visitors. Yet in these days since the signing of further treaties, in these days since the collapse of the cold war, in these days since the acceptance of America's abilities concerning mutually assured destruction, the Test Site has itself become a place of pilgrimage for nuclear enthusiasts. Even the remnants of nuclear events may be worthy of visitation, for certainly they raise for themselves headstones not easily defaced.

The most impressive, perhaps, of all of them is the Operation Storax "Sedan" test, discussed earlier in this consideration. Yet to claim that the ability to impress is the highest goal of a work of art would be to place a convention center above the Sistine Chapel, a dictionary over a sonnet, the mountain over Mohammed. While scale is hardly a minor factor in a work of art, it is no more the ultimate determinant than any other. The craters formed by nuclear tests vary widely in size and shape, and yet

each have their own charms, their own intricacies, their own characters.

They were all positioned by intelligent hands, giving their dispersal a certain orderly chaos in which a viewer might engage far more than in the natural chaos of the lunar surface. It is manmade chaos; that is to say, manmade nature.

Some are shallow caves, downward-facing, burst into the earth. Some are sandy depressions collapsed perfectly in upon themselves. Some are burnt, blackened monstrosities, pits as if unto hell, or rather gateways, as it was indeed hell that from them burst forth. Some are misformed, mottled and asymmetric, while some are pure representations of the Euclidean ideal. Some are clean and unobtrusive, whereas others have tossed soil all about them, the expulsions of a manmade Vesuvius. They catch the sun and their radioactive glasses refract it, making heavenly oases in that most sterile of sandy expanses. When the sun wanes the shadows move as one within them, marking the day's end like twilight coming through pine trees. Each of them is a thing worthy of appreciation, yet the whole of man's exploits here is far greater than a simple roster of its parts.

When it comes to sheer demonstrations of power it is the brow of the split atom which most often deserves the laurel, whether it rests proudly upon its host or else girds it with protest placards and chants of the 2-4-6-8 variety. For while it does

inspire the primitive creature within to look upon such an array as the Nevada Test Site presents, this plays the same heart-string as does viewing a sunset or any other wild phenomena of the grander sort. This primitive neo-Romantic veneration has its charms, just as man once worshipped the divinity of mountains. But despite the undeniable aesthetic of such anachronistic grandeur, why should awe be confined to mountains when it can also be directed to such things which move them?

The "Sedan" shot was one of only several such modifications of the earth itself accomplished by the nuclear. American atomic activity in the Bikini Atoll caused such destruction that simple landscaping was transcended to become nothing short of permanent geographic reconfiguration. One portion of the atolls sank beneath the weight of the first true thermonuclear detonation, disappearing entirely beneath the waves, a veritable Atlantis beneath a portable Deluge. The mixed media detonation of the semi-aquatic "Chagan" shot, a widely-publicized Soviet nuclear test presented as a peaceful nuclear explosion, created an inner reservoir for Lake Chagan where not so much as a pond existed before. The original littoral body has a surface area of 3.5 square kilometers, and holds ten million square meters of water. The new reservoir, despite having a surface area of only .14 square kilometers, holds seven million square meters of water. The beach

that surrounds it is made entirely of glittering glass, frozen from boiling rock-face exposed to the blast.

While the theoretical uses of nuclear detonations as world-changers are as varied as the human imagination, certain specific strategies have been constructed by various nuclear powers. Perhaps the most iconoclastic of these was called in utero "Operation CHARIOT," which proposed to use a series of nuclear explosions to create, instantaneously, harborage for American ships at sea. From one moment to the next, what was otherwise inhospitable terrain would, by the whim of man, be turned into the most amiable and reliable of any anchoring the world over. What was otherwise coastline would instead form a passageway almost nine hundred feet wide, leading into a protected cove that with rudimentary dredging would be the size of more than 88 football fields. Designed to be placed on the north slope of Alaska, this operation would require the expenditure of only five nuclear warheads. Thus its fissile cost would represent only a small reduction of America's nuclear arsenal, likewise these five detonations would still be only a fractional percentage of the nuclear tests conducted by America alone. Should it ever be considered in the interests of the country, there is no treaty to which the United States is a signatory that would prevent its execution of this operation.

Indeed, though there may be many valid objections to be made concerning

the expenditure, towards whatever ends, of nuclear devices, scholars of aesthetics may continue to find solace in the knowledge that the atomic sculpture-garden is hardly a barren attraction. It can only be a comfort to all to note that only two of the thousands of nuclear explosions were instruments of warfare. Yet there is a certain amount of the atomic art that, at its most pacific, is never without that inherent bellicosity. Their ability to be both the bludgeon and the stiletto, the rod and the axe, the epic and yet the exquisitely ephemeral, separates them at all times from their peers in the 'decorative' realm. But to deny their contribution to the body of human artistic creations is to cause those two sublimities, morality and mortality, to blind us to an immense category of beauty. While we may choose to reject, upon whatever ground, the use of these brushes upon some or all canvasses, this does not require us to reject their positive attributes and contributions to the field of human knowledge. One might just as well choose to avoid receiving vaccinations due to the fact that Jenner's test subjects never signed forms indicating their informed consent.

Perhaps this was best expressed, however unconsciously, by J. Robert Oppenheimer. Considered often to be the 'Father of the Bomb,' Oppenheimer was instrumental in devising the first ever successful nuclear device, after which point he expended the majority of his remaining energies in attempting

to reverse nuclear proliferation and remove the atomic weapon from the arsenals of the world. Oppenheimer was present at the first atomic test, so few years and yet an age ago, and he stood at the Trinity Test Site in the Nevada deserts and gazed up as that soon-signature cloud burst forth from his creation, and as he says,

"We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that one way or another."

And though it is only the restraint of man which keeps atomic weapons from being such destroyers of worlds, let us not allow that fact to restrain us from appreciating

such of them as may be appreciated. Let us listen to the words of this God, as did this legendary prince, but let us also gaze upon the form that he presents to us, and wonder in all that it has which we may wonder at. For as long as we are mortal let us live to avoid the hastening of our ends, but so long as our lives are short there is no reason for us not to appreciate such majesties, such beauties, as we may find in them.



I COULD NEVER GET THE HANG OF THURSDAYS

[A fortnightly column by Douglas Adams*]

Yet another Thursday. I've realized that I've almost started dreading fortnightly Thursdays as of late, because it means that it's time for me to write another column, whether or not I actually have anything to say. Which is the case of this week's column: I don't really have one particular subject to discuss for your enjoyment (or lackthereof) this week, so instead, I'm just going to discuss a few strange things I've been thinking about for the past two weeks.

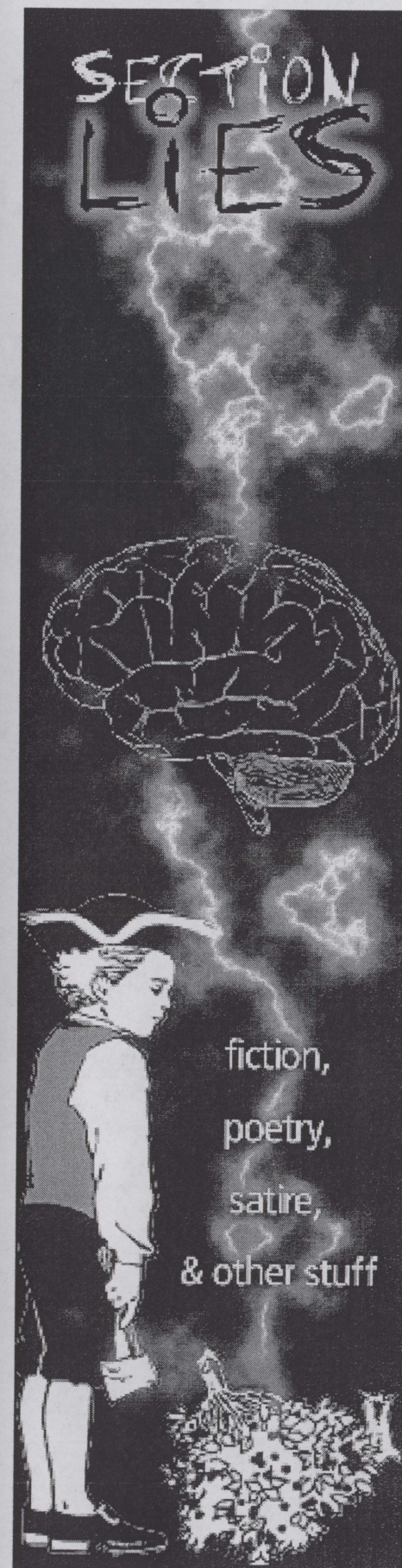
It seems to me that everyone in this beloved college community has been sick these past two weeks. I would like to applaud the collective immune systems of the students on this campus for their camaraderie; it's a very nice gesture, showing your immune system brethren that you support them by failing in the same manner yourself. You're clearly a very united group of blood cells, and I just want to let you know that you've proven your point. Any illness that was thinking about just taking one of you on will certainly think twice next time. At this point in time, though, it would be especially considerate of you to relinquish your death-grasp on the bodies of your hosts. I'm sure the students whose bodies you inhabit would very much like to be healthy again, so they can

continue thinking very hard about starting the vast amount of work that is due before they are released for spring break.

Sadly, that's really all I have to say for this week. This column was due in three days ago, and if I don't hand it in now, my editor will have my head on a stick. I'd very much like to promise that next week I'll go back to writing lengthy articles about nothing in particular, but being a professional writer procrastinator, I realize that's a rather unfair promise to make. I do hope that all of you who are ill recover soon. And please remember to wish me a happy belated birthday, as I turned 55 on March 11th.

**The spirit of Douglas Adams is channeled by Rachel Rakov. Her immune system failed her this week, leaving her with little stamina and an inability to communicate with Mr. Adams for a long enough time to produce a lengthy article.*

[by Rachel Rakov]



[The Omen Staff Survey]

My name Andrea Godshalk
 childhood ambition architect used to draw floor plans
 fondest memory standing on sun drenched hillside looking at the murals of the Bogside, Northern Ireland
 soundtrack Nina Simone (ANYTHING)
 retreat poetry (feminist)
 wildest dream grow peace at my own ART farm, while writing too!
 proudest moment painted mural
 biggest challenge Being new everyday
 alarm clock 7:04
 perfect day sleep late, ^{grow things} eat good, write ^{x paint}, feed friends
 first job Sand table tops in dad's shop
 indulgence loose time
 last purchase groceries
 favorite movie ~~~~~
 inspiration Brave & wild artists
 My life is stumbles, dancing & trying again.
 My job is to make the joyous beauty bigger & the cruel misery smaller.

Find the job that fits your life at hampshire.edu



My life. My job.

[The Omen Staff Survey]

My name Christine Keith - Admission
 childhood ambition to be able to travel ~~wherever~~ the world
 fondest memory going to Ireland with my mother & sister
 soundtrack anything celtic
 retreat the spa
 wildest dream to be able to retire at 50 & travel
 proudest moment giving birth to my first son
 biggest challenge raising two teenage boys
 alarm clock yes, I need one
 perfect day 85°, sunny, at the beach without children
 first job Paper route for Hastings in Anchester
 indulgence shoes, shoes & more shoes
 last purchase shoes
 favorite movie the 1st star wars series
 inspiration my children
 My life with teenagers, I don't have one
 My job love it, it's my escape

Find the job that fits your life at hampshire.edu

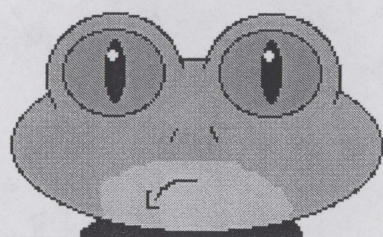


My life. My job.

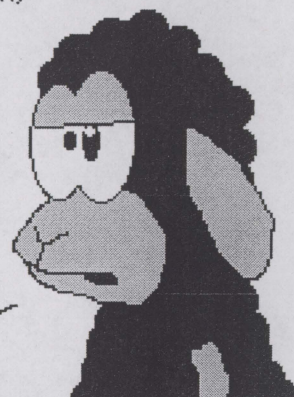
BLACK SHEEP & FROG

...Use Calculus to Describe Their Relationship Problems

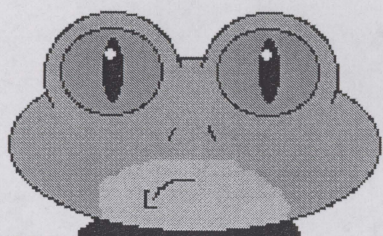
YOU'D THINK AFTER JESS KISSED ME IT WOULD BE EASIER,
BUT I FEEL LIKE ITS JUST GOTTEN MORE AWKWARD.
I AM AN ASYMPTOTE. I GET INFINITELY CLOSER
TO DATING JESS BUT I'LL NEVER ACTUALLY GET THERE.



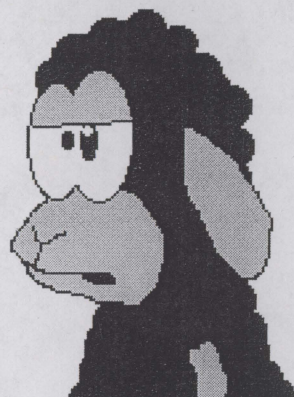
WOULDN'T THAT MAKE
HER THE ASYMPTOTE?



WHAT?



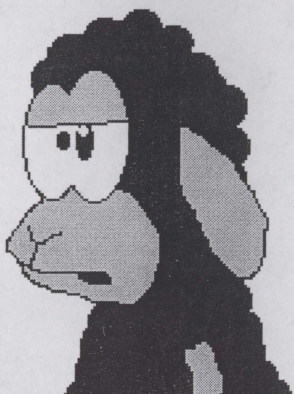
THE ASYMPTOTE IS THE
NUMBER THAT NEVER GETS
APPROACHED.
YOU'D BE THE CURVE.



YEAH, I KNOW.



THAT'S NOT
WHAT YOU SAID
THOUGH.



BY ANDREW FLANAGAN